

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 166534  
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY IO/UNP:RAPECK:CB

APPROVED BY IO:JABAKER

IO/UNP:GBHELMAN

NEA:ARLAY

DOD/OSD/ISA:EMELANSON

L/NEA:WRHODES

S/S-O"AWOTTO

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R 162117Z JUL 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 166534

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IS, LE

SUBJECT: ROLE OF TRUCE OBSERVERS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

REFS: (A)JERUSALEM 934; (B)BEIRUT 3149

1. DEPARTMENT CONSIDERATION OF QUESTIONS RAISED  
REFTEL B COINCIDED WITH DEBRIEFING OF OUTGOING SENIOR  
U.S. MILITARY OBSERVER LT. COL. IORI. CAPT. CROMAR,  
ALSO RETURNING FROM UNTSO TOUR, AND UNTSO ACTION  
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PAGE 02 STATE 166534

OFFICER IN DOD, LT. COL. BOUTON, ALSO JOINED DISCUSSION.  
FOLLOWING REFLECTS THEIR VIEWS AS WELL AS DEPARTMENT'S  
AND WAS CLEARED IN DOD.

2. UNTSO APPEARS TO HAVE LITTLE DETERRENT EFFECT ON  
IDF CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES. QUESTION OF DETERRENT  
EFFECT ON PALESTINIAN CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS IS MOOT

AT THIS TIME SINCE MAINLINE PLO/FATAH FORCES HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED FOR MOMENT TO FOREGO SUCH OPERATIONS AND REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS APPEAR TO HAVE OTHER OBJECTIVES.

3. THE UN CONSIDERS THAT THE MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSIONS HAVE NEVER OFFICIALLY BEEN TERMINATED, THOUGH THE ISRAELIS TAKE THE VIEW THAT THE MAC'S

WITH SYRIA, JORDAN AND EGYPT CEASED TO EXIST WHEN THOSE ARMISTICE AGREEMENTS WERE BREACHED IN 1967. INFORMAL MEETINGS CONTINUE TO TAKE PLACE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, PARTICULARLY ON THE JORDANIAN FRONT, BUT THESE ARE NOT IN THE MAC CONTEXT. WHILE ILMAC'S CONTINUED FORMAL EXISTENCE IS UNQUESTIONED, THE LACK OF ANY LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY IN THE BORDER AREA PRECLUDES ITS REACTIVATION AT THIS TIME. REVIVAL OF ILMAC MIGHT AT SOME POINT, HOWEVER, BE DESIRABLE BOTH FOR ITS PRACTICAL UTILITY AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPHASIZING THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

4. REGARDING OTHER BORDER AREAS, UNTSO PROVIDES IMPORTANT, OFFICER-LEVEL SUPPORT TO THE UN CHIEF COORDINATOR AND HIS FORCE COMMANDERS IN CARRYING OUT THE MORE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ASPECTS OF THEIR WORK, MOST IMPORTANTLY INSPECTIONS OF THE LIMITED CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 166534

FORCES AREAS. EVEN SHOULD UNTSO BE WITHDRAWN FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON, THE UN WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY WANT TO RETAIN UNTSO OR SOMETHING LIKE IT TO SUPPLEMENT THE NATIONAL CONTINGENTS IN UNDOF AND UNEF.

5. UNTSO IS PROBABLY LEAST EFFECTIVE IN FULFILLING ITS FORMAL MANDATE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW, HOWEVER, THAT UNTSO SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM LEBANON. IN FACT WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD REMAIN THERE UNLESS SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS MAKE THIS UNTENABLE. UNTSO HAS REMAINED ON THE JOB FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS, THROUGH GOOD AND BAD TIMES. TO WITHDRAW UNTSO NOW WOULD CREATE AN IMPRESSION OF EXTRAORDINARY CRISIS AND DANGER WHICH COULD ITSELF CONTRIBUTE TO A FURTHER DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION. THIS ACTION WOULD RUN DIRECTLY COUNTER TO OUR EFFORTS AND THOSE OF THE PARTIES -- AT LEAST THE ISRAELIS, SYRIANS AND LEBANESE -- TO CALM THE SITUATION AND TO WORK QUIETLY TOWARD A LONG-RANGE SOLUTION. IN ADDITION, WE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO SEE UNTSO WITHDRAWN BECAUSE OF THE PRECEDENT THIS WOULD SET. THE IMAGE OF UN PEACEKEEPING STILL SUFFERS

FROM THE PRECIPITATE WITHDRAWAL OF UNEF I IN 1967, AND  
A WITHDRAWAL, APPARENTLY UNDER FIRE, FROM SOUTHERN  
LEBANON WOULD REVIVE THOSE MEMORIES AND HAVE IMPLICATIONS  
FOR FUTURE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS. FINALLY, ONCE UNTSO  
IN WITHDRAWN FROM THE AREA IT MIGHT WELL BE DIFFICULT  
TO REINTRODUCE A UN PRESENCE. IF IT APPEARS DESIRABLE  
AT SOME POINT TO CREATE A REAL PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN  
SOUTHERN LEBANON, UNTSO MIGHT PROVIDE AT LEAST THE  
OPENING WEDGE WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POLITICALLY EASIER

TO DO THIS.

6. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY  
OF UNTSO PERSONNEL BECAUSE OF THE INDISCRIMINATE  
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PAGE 04 STATE 166534

FIRING IN THE VICINITY OF OBSERVER POSTS AND THE  
GENERALLY CHAOTIC SECURITY SITUATION IN AREAS THROUGH  
WHICH OBSERVERS MUST TRAVEL.

7. FOR USUN: UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES WE WOULD ASK  
YOU TO DISCUSS OUR SECURITY CONCERNS IN LEBANON WITH  
SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS, PRESUMING YOU COULD DO SO  
WITHOUT AROUSING UNDUE SUSPICION AS TO OUR MOTIVES.  
HOWEVER, WE HAVE JUST LEARNED INFORMALLY OF AN  
INCIDENT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WHICH BEARS ON THIS  
SITUATION. YOU SHOULD NOT, REPEAT NOT, RAISE OUR  
CONCERNS WITH SECRETARIAT AT THIS TIME. FURTHER  
INSTRUCTIONS WILL FOLLOW.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
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**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, PBOR, IS, LE  
**To:** BEIRUT USUN NEW YORK  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/e5f4356a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009